

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: MEDIA QUERY AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CONCERNING UNDERWATER CABLE

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION CINCLANT INFO CINCLANTFLT COMOCEANSYSLANT
LANTCOMOSUPFAC FROM COMICEDEFOR JUL 29 REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE

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MEDIA QUERY AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CONCERNING UNDERWATER CABLE

1. SUMMARY: AN ICELANDIC TRAWLER REPORTEDLY FOULED HER TRAWL ON AN
UNDERWATER CABLE OFF THE REYKJANES (PENINSULA) NEAR KEFLAVIK LATE
LAST WEEK. PROGRESSIVE PARTY NEWSPAPER TIMINN SUBMITTED QUERY TO
COMICEDEFOR CONCERNING INCIDENT. FOLLOWING IS TRANSLATION OF
NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, AND QUERY AND RESPONSE PROVIDED. END SUMMARY.

2. HEADLINE FROM PAGE 1 (COLUMN 1-5) TIMINN EDITION OF 29 JULY:
"THEY FOULED THEIR LOBSTER TRAWL ON AN UNREGISTERED CABLE SOUTHWEST
OF ELDEY".

"AT AROUND SIX IN THE EVENING OF THURSDAY THE LOBSTER BOAT
'THORKELL ARNASON GK-21' FOULED HER TRAWL WHEN FISHING IN A DEPTH
OF 70 FATHOMS SOUTH EAST ON ELDEY. THE CREW UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED
TO GET THE TRAWL UP BUT COULD NOT UNTIL BY MORNING AFTER THE
RESEARCH SHIP 'BJARNI SAEMUNDSSON' HAD ARRIVED TO HER ASSISTANCE.

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"THE TRAWL TURNED OUT TO BE WRAPPED MANY TIMES AROUND A 10 TO 15 CENTIMETRES THICK CABLE. THE CREW OF THE 'BJARNI SAEMUNDSSON' DID NOT CONSIDER IT ADVISABLE TO CUT THE CABLE AND DROPPED IT INTO THE SEA AGAIN. ACCORDING TO DATA FROM THE ICELANDIC HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICE NO CABLE IS ENTERED ON CHARTS OVER THIS AREA.

"THE 'THORKELL ARNASON GK-21' IS A 65 TON LOBSTER FISHING BOAT, FISHING IN A LEGAL AREA SOUTH OF ELDEY, - THREE NAUTICAL MILES OFF THE ISLAND AND SIX NAUTICAL MILES OFF THE REYKJANES LIGHT HOUSE - LAST THURSDAY. WHEN THE CREW WAS ABOUT TO TAKE IN THE TRAWL GEAR AROUND SIX, EVERYTHING WAS FOULED ON THE BOTTOM AND THE TRAWL GEAR COULD NOT BE MOVED NO MATTER HOW THEY TRIED. AFTER SOME HARD WORK THEY MANAGED TO GET THE TRAWL DOORS UP AND INTO THE BOAT.

"THE CREW OF THE FISHING BOAT WAS INFORMED, BY THE CREW OF A NEARBY FISHING BOAT, THAT THE RESEARCH SHIP 'BJARNI SAEMUNDSSON' WAS IN THE AREA. THE CREW OF THE FISHING BOAT CALLED UP THE RESEARCH SHIP AND ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE. THE RESEARCH SHIP WAS 28 NAUTICAL MILES OFF AND DID NOT ARRIVE UNTIL AROUND FIVE IN THE MORNING OF FRIDAY. THE CREW OF THE RESEARCH SHIP QUICKLY MANAGED TO GRAPPLE THE TRAWL AND BRING IT UP AND THEN LEARNED, THAT THE ENTIRE TRAWL WAS WRAPPED AROUND A 10 TO 15 CENTIMETRES THICK CABLE. THE TRAWL WAS SO BADLY FOULED ON THE CABLE THAT IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO SALVAGE BUT THE TRAWL BAG ALONE. THE REST WAS THROWN BACK INTO THE SEA WITH THE CABLE AS IT WAS NOT CONSIDERED ADVISABLE TO CUT THE CABLE SINCE A REQUEST TO THIS EFFECT CAME FROM A COAST GUARD SHIP WHICH WAS CONTACTED, THAT IS THAT THE CABLE SHOULD NOT BE TAMPERED WITH.

"THE CABLE WAS DROPPED BACK INTO THE SEA AROUND EIGHT IN THE MORNING AND THIS WORK HAD TAKEN ABOUT FOURTEEN HOURS. THE OCEAN FLOOR IN THIS AREA IS SMOOTH AND FLAT AND, ACCORDING TO CHARTS, NO CABLE IS TO BE IN THIS AREA. THE CAPTAIN OF THE RESEARCH SHIP 'BJARNI SAEMUNDSSON', SAEMUNDUR AUDUNSSON, STATED THAT THIS CABLE APPEARED RELATIVELY NEW TO HIM, NO MORE THAN FIVE TO SIX YEARS OLD.

"ACCORDING TO TIMINN'S INFORMATION ANOTHER FISHING BOAT, THE 'SIGURPALL' FROM SANDGERDI, LOST HER TRAWL IN A SIMILAR AREA AND THE CREW OF THAT BOAT BELIEVED THAT IT HAD SEEN A CABLE SINKING IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SEA.

"CREW MEMBERS OF OTHER FISHING BOATS HAVE REPORTED THAT THEY SAW A SUSPICIOUS LOOKING SHIP IN THIS AREA A FEW YEARS AGO AND IT MAY BE THAT THIS WAS A CABLE LAYING SHIP.

"THE DAMAGE WHICH THE 'THORKELL ARNASON' HAS SUFFERED IS QUITE GREAT. IN ADDITION TO LOSING THE TRAWL GEAR, THE TRAWL WIRES ARE

DESTROYED AS THEIR TENSILE STRENGTH HAS BEEN DESTROYED AFTER THE STRAIN. IN ADDITION TO THIS THE FISHING BOAT WAS DAMAGED, BOTH THE WINCH AND THE TRAWL GALLOWS. THE QUESTION IS ON THE OTHER HAND WHO SHALL PAY FOR THE DAMAGE.

"HANNES GUDMUNDSSON OF THE DEFENSE AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS DID NOT CONSIDER IT UNLIKELY THAT THIS IS AN AMERICAN CABLE IDENTICAL TO THE CABLE FOUND OFF STOKKSNES NOT LONG AGO, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT WANT TO OFFER ANY ASSERTIONS AT THIS STAGE. ON THE OTHER HAND THIS MATTER WOULD BE INVESTIGATED AND IF IT TURNS OUT THAT THE CABLE IS AMERICAN, THE OWNERS OF THE FISHING BOAT WILL EXPECTEDLY HAVE TO BRING A DAMAGES CLAIM AGAINST THE STATE TREASURY OF ICELAND.

"THE PAPER ALSO CALLED ON MEAD, PRESS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCE WHO SAID, THAT HE KNEW ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FOR THE TIME BEING."

3. CAPTION OF PHOTO ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE: "THE BJARNI SAEMUNDSSON BRINGS UP THE LOBSTER TRAWL OF THE THORKELL ARNASON GK-21. THE ARROW POINTS AT THE CABLE WHICH THE TRAWL WAS WRAPPED AROUND. TIMINN PHOTO BY KRISTJAN JOHANNESSEN."

4. PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE NEWSPAPER THJODVILJINN EDITION OF 29 JULY ALSO CARRIED REPORT OF INCIDENT ON PAGE 1, COLUMN 1-3. ARTICLE BY EINAR KARL HARALDSSON REPORTED FOULING INCIDENT AS OCCURRING FRIDAY AND LISTED LOCATION WHERE TRAWL WAS FOULED AS 299 DEGREES, 3.6 NAUTICAL MILES WEST NORTHWEST OFF ELDEY. THJODVILJINN SUBMITTED NO QUERY TO COMICEDEFOR AND MADE NO MENTION OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) OR DEFENSE AFFAIRS DIVISION OF MFA AS DID TIMINN.

5. HELGI JOHNSON OF TIMINN SUBMITTED FOLLOWING QUERY MONDAY TO UNCLASSIFIED

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COMICEDEFOR: "THE CREW OF AN ICELANDIC FISHING BOAT WORKING OFF THE REYKJANES GOT THEIR FISHING GEAR CAUGHT IN AN UNDERWATER CABLE THURSDAY NIGHT, 24 JULY 75. AFTER 14 HOURS THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING THE CABLE AND FISHING GEAR TO THE SURFACE AND SUBSEQUENTLY FREEING THE GEAR FROM THE CABLE. THE CABLE WAS FOUR OR FIVE INCHES IN DIAMETER. IS THE CABLE AMERICAN?"

6. FOLLOWING RESPONSE WAS PROVIDED TIMINN AFTER COORDINATION WITH APPROPRIATE AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK AND GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND (GOI) OFFICIALS AND CINCLANT PAO: "BASED ON THE SKETCHY INFORMATION AVAILABLE, WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING. AS RECENTLY INDICATED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AN UNDERWATER CABLE IS PART OF THE DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS IN ICELAND AND IT IS CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE TO COMMENT FURTHER."
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